



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
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Circular Letter: DHCQ 17-1-667

To: Adult Day Health Program Administrators
Non- Ambulatory Surgical Center Clinic Chief Executive Officers or Practice Managers
Nursing Home Administrators
Rest Home Administrators

FROM: Eric Sheehan, JD 
Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: January 23, 2017

RE: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Adult Day Health Programs, Non- Ambulatory Surgical Center Clinics, Nursing Homes and Rest Homes for the 2016-2017 Influenza Season

The purpose of this circular letter is to inform Massachusetts Adult Day Health Programs, Clinics that are not licensed as Ambulatory Surgical Centers, Nursing Homes, and Rest Homes of the steps needed to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) requirement to submit annual Healthcare Personnel (HCP) influenza data to DPH by April 15, 2017.

Background

As a condition of licensure, DPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

- Offer free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
- Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization; and
- Report information to DPH documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner (105 CMR.)¹

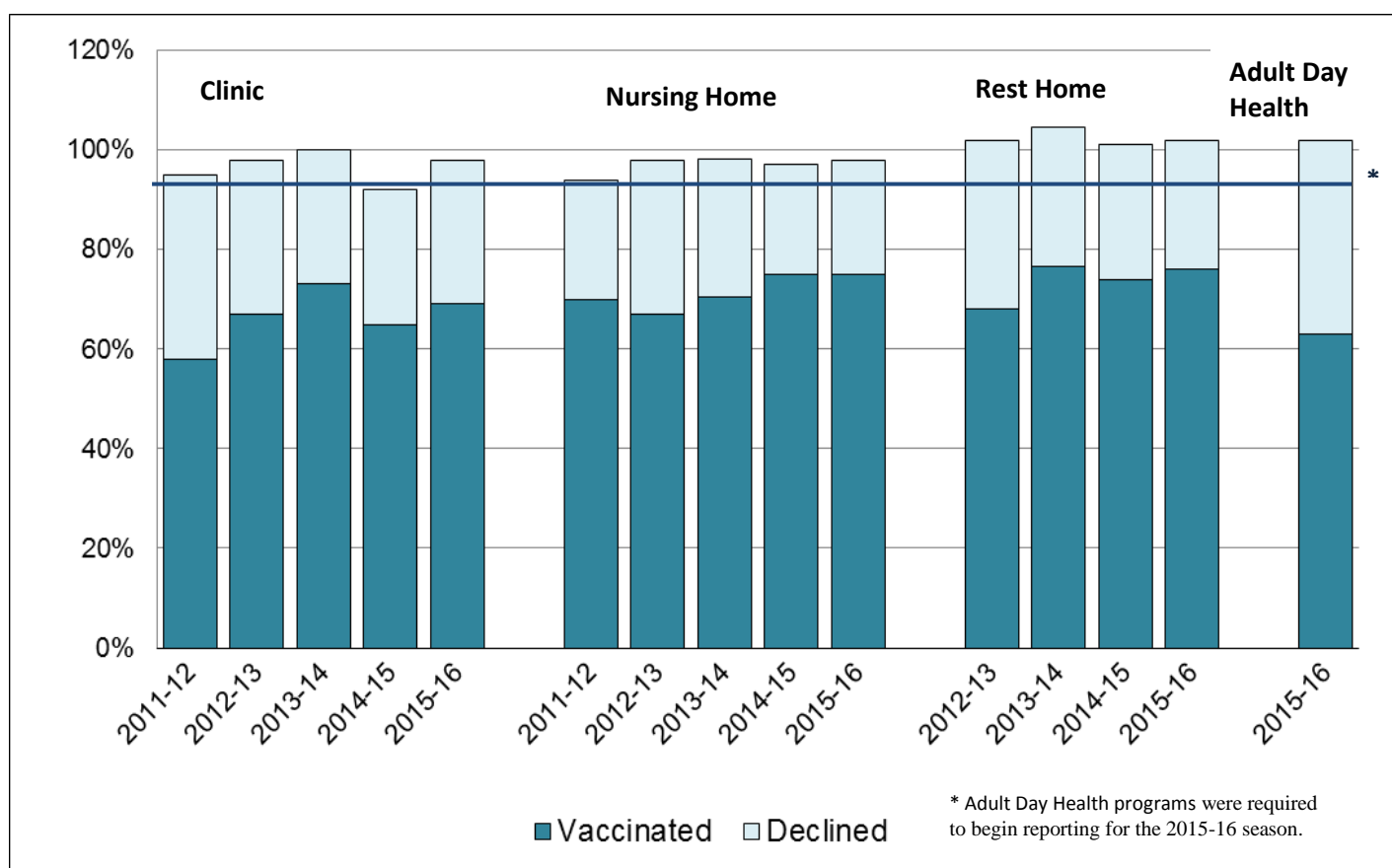
¹105 CMR 130.325, 105 CMR 140.150, 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8), 105 CMR 158.030(L)(8).

To protect the lives and welfare of patients, employees, and communities, as well as to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, DPH has established an overall minimum influenza vaccination rate of 90% or greater for eligible HCP at all licensed healthcare facilities. The DPH strongly encourages all licensed healthcare facilities to implement an evidence-based vaccination initiative to achieve the established goal of vaccinating 90% or more of eligible HCP.

DPH considers the prevention of influenza by promoting vaccination to be an organizational priority that should be part of the overall institutional commitment to improvement for licensed healthcare facilities. Successful implementation of strategies to ensure compliance is dependent on clear administrative policies and committed executive leadership. Continuing to increase the rate of influenza vaccination coverage among HCP will only be achieved with significant commitment and effort.

Figure 1 depicts trends in influenza vaccination rates in non-acute care facilities in Massachusetts from the 2011-12 influenza seasons through the 2015-16 season. Overall, facilities reported similar or slightly improved mean vaccine coverage rates in 2015-16 when compared to 2014-15. The 2015-16 season was the first year adult day health programs were required to report their data. No facility type reached the 90% coverage goal.

Figure 1. MEAN PERCENT OF HCP RECEIVING AND DECLINING INFLUENZA VACCINATION: 2011-2016



Failure to submit the required influenza data may result in a statement of deficiency against the facility to which you will be required to submit a plan of correction subject to enforcement action as warranted.

Compliance with this regulatory requirement will also be assessed during surveys currently conducted by DPH.

Reporting Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data

Detailed instructions for completing the DPH 2016-2017 seasonal influenza reporting requirements for HCP are available at the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at the following link: www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq. Upon reaching the website, click on the “Influenza Vaccination Reporting 2016-2017” link to access reporting requirements and data submission forms.

Important Instructions for the 2016-2017 Influenza Season

Deadline for submitting the mandatory data is April 15, 2017, 5pm

All required HCP influenza data must be submitted to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us

It is your responsibility to ensure that this circular letter is forwarded to all persons in your healthcare facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including but not limited to: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Chief Nursing Officers, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection.² DPH is dedicated to working with you to ensure that patients and personnel are protected. Thank you for your ongoing participation in this important initiative. Please submit questions concerning the reporting and data submission requirements to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at: dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us.

References and Resources

Many resources are available to help healthcare facilities develop influenza campaigns and identify best practices for increasing HCP vaccination rates. The following is a non-inclusive list of resources:

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

www.cdc.gov/flu/

Seasonal Influenza: Flu Basics

www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm

Information for Health Professionals

www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm

MMWR- Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-United States, 2016–17 Influenza Season
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6505a1.htm>

A Toolkit for Long-Term Care Employers
Increasing Influenza Vaccination among Health Care Personnel in Long-term Care Settings
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/index.htm>

Influenza Infection Control in Health Care Facilities
www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/index.htm

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Free Resources
www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Information for Businesses & Employers
www.cdc.gov/flu/business/

Influenza Vaccination of Health-Care Personnel
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm

Healthcare Personnel Immunization
www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Healthcare-Immunization

Providing a Safer Environment for Health Care Personnel and Patients through Influenza Vaccination-
Strategies from Research and Practice
www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/flu_monograph.pdf
Strategies for Improving Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccination Rates
www.jointcommission.org/topics/hai_influenza.aspx

HHS Prevention Strategies-Health Care-Associated Infections
www.health.gov/hai/prevent_hai.asp

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health website provides information, clinical advisories and
guidance for healthcare professionals on the prevention and treatment of influenza.
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/guidelines-resources/services-planning/diseases-conditions/influenza/information-for-healthcare-and-public-health.html>

cc: Monica Bharel MD, MPH, Commissioner, Department of Public Health
Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Diseases and Laboratory Sciences

² <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm>